

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

ONLY A BUSINESS MAN.

By MAY DRYDEN.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE time had arrived when Gordon and Clarence Fenchurch had determined to give their opening-party to their mill-hands. Staniland and Mark, with their wives, came over for it, bringing with them such of their children as were old enough. But the younger brother had all the arrangement of the affair on his hands, and had enough to do, especially as Clarence had her hands full of work in preparing for the houseful of guests she would have to entertain on the occasion. They were both looking forward to the day very much, Gordon especially being delighted at the idea of having his little nephews and nieces with him for a time. Oddly enough, this melancholy, thoughtful young man: who seemed to older people morbidly self-conscious or stupidly absorbed in his business, as one side or the other of his character showed itself: was an immense favourite with little children, for one and all of whom he had an intense fondness, no doubt partly the outcome of the innate chivalry of his nature, which caused him to be always strongly drawn to whatever or whoever was weak and in need of protection. The strongest man could not, by strength of will, have altered a determination of Gordon Fenchurch's one jot; the weakest woman could move him to her way, if only that way were a straightforward one, by force of her very weakness. His little nieces were specially devoted to Uncle Gordon, and one little maid of seven years old was never happy in his presence unless permitted to climb on his knee and nestle in his arms, where she would lie contentedly for an hour at a time.

Gordon sent invitations for his party to all the Carfields, young and old, thereby causing immense excitement in the family, the younger members of which were nearly wild with delight. Phoebe and Luke were pleased, too, but Daniel was troubled by conflicting sentiments. His feelings were hurt in that he had been invited to take tea with a party of unintelligent, utterly unæsthetic workpeople, and yet it would be an opportunity of seeing Clarence Fenchurch again, and that he was extremely desirous to do. He was fully persuaded in his own mind that she was as much struck with him as he was with her, and finally he condescended to make one of the party on that eventful evening.

The hands had drawn up a programme for the first part of the evening, and that being completed, they played games and walked about, conversing with each other and with their hosts, who mingled with them on terms of apparent equality most distasteful to Daniel. He held himself aloof and leant against the wall in a retired corner, looking so gloomy that Clarence could not help feeling sorry for him. Resting from her labours for a moment, she paused at his side while she asked him if he were unwell or overtired.

"Unwell?" replied he pitifully; "no, not yet, but I shall be. Who could breathe this atmosphere and mingle with these people without being the worse for it?"

"Why," said Clarence, looking at him with somewhat contemptuous astonishment, "I can, of course. What treason are you talking? Do you not know that we regard these people as our friends? They, as well as you, are our guests to-night."

"I beg your pardon," said he half apologetically. "I did not know you were in earnest about it."

"About what?"

"Oh, well, you know, it is rather the fashion nowadays for young ladies to take up philanthropy, and I am sure I cannot imagine anyone's going in for this sort of thing, excepting just for a change. Now, I cannot pretend to find any amusement with people who are so coarse that really their only merit is that they afford material for charitable folks to work upon. Really, you know, Miss Carfield, to use a vulgar expression, you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, try as hard as you will."

"I am thoroughly convinced of that fact," answered Clarence very quietly. "I am thoroughly convinced of that fact. Permit me also to assure you, Mr. Daniel Carfield, that I am always in earnest."

So saying, she walked away, her self-command well-nigh destroyed by Daniel's almost inconceivable self-conceit. It was too hard to be told that she had taken philanthropy up as an amusement, just for a change, when, after her devotion to Gordon, she regarded it as the greatest aim of her life to impart of her knowledge to her less gifted friends, for such, in truth, was the light in which she regarded the mill-girls. Besides which, she was disappointed and vexed at finding one of the Carfields so commonplace and stupid. She had made up her mind that they were all nice, and good, and clever, and she did not like altering her opinion—he never did like it, and had not done so often enough to get used to the process.

She frowned as she left Daniel, and, feeling disinclined to enter into conversation with anyone just then, she stopped at her brother's side to listen to a three-cornered argument that was going on between him, Luke Carfield, and old Mrs. Watkins.

Mrs. Watkins was the mother of the girls whom Gordon had described on one occasion as fat and red. She had accepted the invitation of the Brothers Fenchurch, under the impression that it would be a gathering such as she had often assisted at in her young days, where the benevolent employer gave his workpeople a tea, looked in for an hour or two in the evening just to receive their thanks and give them a word of good advice, and then left them to their own devices. Her husband, rampant Radical as he was in politics, did not approve of anything so practically levelling as the way in which the guests had been treated this evening, and in another part of the room was doing his best by kindly con-

descension to give what he considered a proper tone to the affair, while expressing disapproval by every movement of his self-asserting figure. Mr. Watkins was a man who might have stood for a model of self-contentment. There was something very peculiar in his appearance; meeting him, you would have looked at him, and wondered what it was in him that was so unusual. Not his great-coat, though that was always of the loudest and newest pattern; not his face, which, though red, and large, and coarse, was not bad-looking; not his voice, though it was loud, and dissonant, and very Lancashire in accent. No; he was peculiar throughout, and the very centre of his peculiarity was his hat. It would be a long time before you found it out, but there it lay. It was a hat that was straight, where other hats are curly; rough, where other hats are smooth. Moreover, it was the best-patterned hat in the world, and its owner was the wisest man who went by the nine-fifty train from Wilton to Homcester; the best judge of a picture, a house, or a bottle of wine, the most discriminating critic of music or the drama, and, above all, the keenest politician. His wife was as shocked as he was by the freedom with which their hosts mingled with their workpeople. She was saying as Clarence drew near:

"But I assure you, my dear Mr. Fenchurch, I heard your sister speak to one of these young louts just as though he were a gentleman."

"That is," said Gordon, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, "as though she were a lady. How would you have had her answer him, Mrs. Watkins? Would you have had her be rude to him?"

"Oh no—certainly not! It is always right to treat the poor with a civil condescension. But there should be a certain air of superiority, or they are apt to forget the difference in rank."

"But supposing there is no superiority?" said Luke Carfield.

"Of course there is. There must be—there ought to be!"

"I grant you that there is," said Gordon, "in a good many cases, at least; but not that there must be or ought to be."

"Oh, Mr. Fenchurch, you would not make them our equals?"

Poor Mrs. Watkins's intense horror at the idea was almost too much for Gordon, but he restrained his desire to laugh, and answered gravely:

"In what way are they not our equals?"

"Well, for one thing, they are poor and we are rich."

"So, then, if I were poor, you would not consider me your equal any longer?"

"Oh, my dear sir, you would be a gentleman under any circumstances. But I dare say some of these people might even have been beggars without a roof over their heads!"

"Very possible," said Gordon; "and, of course, highly immoral in them, though, in my opinion, they would have done worse to have remained in that condition. But I think that I remember a saying in a certain wise old Book, 'That the Son of Man had not where to lay His head,' and I never heard that anyone despised Him for it."

"Of course, that was not His fault at all, but the fault of the sinners amongst whom He laboured," said Mrs. Watkins, shocked again by the irreverence which could bring such an allusion into an everyday conversation.

"It is the fault of the sinners still," said Gordon, "that there is poverty at all, and of the rich sinners more than of the poor ones."

"But you would not do away with poor people?"

"Indeed I would. I would have no man so poor that he should need to ask anything from his fellow-man, save justice and the liberty to earn his daily bread."

"But," almost gasped Mrs. Watkins, "that is downright irreligious. It is fore-ordained that there must be poor people. You know the Bible says, 'The poor ye have always with you.' Besides, what is to become of the grace of charity if the poor are done away with?"

"So," said Luke, "the poor are to be poor that the rich may have the credit of relieving them? I suppose, on the same principle, you would encourage disease that the doctors may make a living by healing it?"

"Well," said Gordon, "I am afraid you and I shall never see the poor done away with, Mrs. Watkins. I do not think you need be alarmed."

"No, indeed, I hope so. It would be too disheartening if now there were to be no poor people, just when Anastasia and I have got our æsthetic night-school established for them."

"An æsthetic night-school!" said Clarence.

"Yes. Ah, my dear Miss Fenchurch, I am a philanthropist, too, though your

brother does try to make me out so hard-hearted."

"What do you teach them, Mrs. Watkins?"

"Well, nothing yet. We are trying what the force of example will do at present. Anastasia and I put on our most artistic dresses, and go to the rooms twice a week with our art-needlework, and we have one thing that must work a reform."

"What is that?"

"A masterpiece by Whistler, my dear! My husband gave it. Oh yes! he is a philanthropist, too. In fact that picture was the reason we founded the night-school. It seemed such a shame that the masses should have no opportunity of seeing it."

"Are your rooms decorated to match?"

"Oh yes! Anastasia designed the decorations. She is so fond of the people and of art, that she said she would make it her life-aim to bring the two together. Was not that a beautiful sentiment, and beautifully expressed? Anastasia is quite a philanthropist, too. So charming in a young person."

"Do you give the people books?"

"Oh yes! Dante Rossetti, and Swinburne, and the less commonplace among Browning's works."

Leaving his sister to receive Mrs. Watkins's communications concerning her æsthetic night-school, Gordon was continuing his conversation with Luke, who said:

"It is very disheartening to see how persistently the people stand in their own way, and will not be raised to a higher level. Sometimes I doubt whether it is right to leave them the choice—whether a righteous despotism would not be better for them."

"Aye, if you could make sure of finding a righteous despot. But now our Government does exercise a somewhat despotic authority in saying to our people 'you shall be educated, whether you will or not.'"

"True, but people ought to be compelled to educate their bodies as well as their minds. It is not a pleasant reflection that in gaols only is there an almost perfect health system. Our criminals are so well cared for, that they enjoy a degree of health almost unattainable by an honest poor man."

"True, certainly," said Gordon. "But come, we have been talking long enough, and Clarence wants me to introduce your sister to Deborah Leighton. She is a very

remarkable girl, I assure you, and would be so in any walk of life."

Luke and Clarence followed him, and watched him make the introduction. Clarence drew a sigh of relief as she saw Phoebe put out her hand as naturally and simply as when she had been introduced to herself, and said to Luke:

"At any rate, your sister has not any false pride."

When Daniel got home that evening, he informed his family that he did not at all approve of such gatherings as the one he had just taken part in; that he had expressed his views to Miss Fenchurch, and that she had been evidently very much struck with them.

Poor Daniel! It was well for his conceit that he did not hear Clarence give her version of his remarks to Gordon, capping them by saying that she wondered how such a sow's-ear as himself came to be found in the same family with those silk purses, his elder brother and sister.

CHAPTER XIV.

ISAAC LEIGHTON was one of the fortunate hands who rented Fenchurch's new houses. He and his wife and two daughters all worked in the mill, and were among the most respectable of the people who did so.

Deborah stood at the door of her father's cottage knitting, and dreamily watching old Isaac as he busied himself in his little strip of garden, which was as beautiful as patient care and the sunshine of a lovely spring could make it. She was dressed just as she had come from her work, in a short print gown, with a white apron, and a shawl drawn over her head and pinned under her chin. She had, however, cleared away the cotton-fluff from the bright hair that peeped from beneath its tidy shelter. At first sight she would not have struck a casual observer as being anything more than an ordinary mill-hand, perhaps a little tidier than such girls usually are. On looking again, however, no one could fail to perceive that here was a woman of a type unfortunately rare in any rank of life.

Deborah's face revealed at once the tenderness and the firmness of her character and the strength and intelligence of her mind. She was very handsome, and of unusually fair complexion. Her rich auburn hair shaded a low, broad, white forehead, from beneath which her brown eyes looked with an indescribable charm of

expression. Her face would have seemed hard save for the wistful tenderness of those soft eyes, which, in truth, were scarcely in keeping with her other features. She looked like one who, having devoted her life to some great and secret sacrifice, had schooled herself into outward immobility, all excepting her eyes—windows whence the imprisoned ghost of her dead longings would peep out and plead silently for pity.

Some two or three evenings had passed away since Mr. Fenchurch's opening-party, and Deborah Leighton was thinking of it still—thinking of it with a keen pleasure in the remembrance, with a deep regret that it was a delight gone by, such as she might perhaps never enjoy again.

To her companions it had been merely a "tea-party"—a more than usually enjoyable one, perhaps, but still only just such a social gathering as they had often taken part in, and would often take part in again. Most of them would have liked it better had they been left to themselves for the greater part of the evening, as was customary on such occasions; they felt the presence of the gentlefolk in some degree a restraint on their merriment. Probably they had been meant so to feel it; the Fenchurches hoped, by degrees, to accustom their hands to a gentler, quieter mode of enjoyment than was at present prevalent with them. But Deborah's pleasure in the evening had been quite different from that of the other hands. She had, for once, enjoyed a brief taste of the life she was always longing for—the life that her whole being was thirsting for—the life intellectual. For one hour of such conversation as she had shared on Saturday evening with Gordon and Clarence Fenchurch, and Phoebe Carfield, Deborah would gladly have bartered all the tea-parties of a Sunday-school year, and have thought that hour cheaply bought.

Poor girl! Who could know how hard and stupid, how utterly wearisome, her workaday life had seemed to her since that evening? How tumultuously her heart and mind had rebelled against her monotonous, mechanical labour! How she had felt at times that she would give all that was dear to her in the world to be permitted to wrench herself free, and force her way to that higher level on which she longed to stand. Passive as she appeared, her thoughts were far from peaceful as she leant, bathed in the evening sunshine, against the doorpost. It was terrible to

be tempted in this way, by what she felt to be the noblest impulses of her soul.

"Debby, child," said a sharp but not unkindly voice behind her.

"Aye, mother," she answered quietly.

"How th' lass stands mooning theer! Does thee na know that it's thy night to go to th' school-missis fur thy lesson, and theer thou'st stonning still."

"Aye, it's time to be going. I'll just put th' watter over for thee, mother, an' be gone in a minute."

She filled the kettle, and hung it on the hook over the fire. Then she looked round the scrupulously tidy kitchen, and did one or two other little acts of domestic service, and finally, taking some books from a table-drawer, called out to her mother, who had sauntered down the garden to her husband:

"I'm going now, mother."

"Get off wi' thee. Aw'll be boun' tha's fettled all th' odd jobs. See if thee conna bring back a bit better spirits wi' thee, my lass."

Deborah walked quickly down the lane which led from the hollow to Lorton village, stopping at Lorton Green at the school-house, a large, square, red-brick building. She went round to the school-mistress's private door; it stood half-open, giving a pleasant view of the bright, clean kitchen, and of its owner sitting at a little table in the window, busily engaged in putting to rights the sewing and knitting over which her little scholars had blundered during the day.

She was a tall, thin woman, melancholy of expression and speech, and looking much careworn, the natural result of a life spent in struggling with the dull intellects of little children, only to see them taken from her care just as they were beginning to profit by her instruction, to lose the most part of what they had learnt in the mechanical labour of the cotton-mill, or in the even more deadening occupation of a day-labourer.

Deborah stood for a moment or two at the door, and then tapped gently. Mrs. Martin turned round quickly, and rose to welcome her visitor with an air of the greatest gratification.

"I thought you were not coming, Deborah. I am glad to see you; I was afraid you must be getting tired of your books."

"I wish I were," said Deborah wearily.

"Now, don't talk nonsense, girl! You might as well wish the beauty Heaven has

given you away from your face as the love of His wisdom away from your mind."

"I know. But I think I must give up coming to you, Mrs. Martin."

"Why, in the name of goodness? Surely you do not mind silly folks laughing?"

"Do they laugh? I did not know. No; I don't mind that at all. But," she spoke slowly, and kept her face turned away from the schoolmistress, "it makes me so discontented to go on learning. The more I know the more I want to know, and the more I hate my life. No; I must stop as I am now, or change altogether."

"Is not that just what I have always said, Deborah? You must change altogether. Why should you not? Leave your present life—leave your work in the mill. Even I can earn my living by teaching, and I have brains enough to know that you have far, far more. Girl, you might be anything you choose."

The schoolmistress spoke with fierce energy, as of a thing she had thought much of, and had very nearly at heart. Her passionate intenseness of manner was to Deborah's mood like fire to tow, and changed it from one of discontented but passive endurance to one of restless and impatient longing.

She rose and paced the room, up and down, up and down, with hurried steps, as though she would run away from herself and her desire. Then she stood still, and with a pleading look put up her hands to her friend.

"Say it again," said she. "Might I be anything I liked?"

"I believe you might. I'm no lady myself, but I know one when I see one, and you are one. One of the best sort, too—one of Nature's making. You might go away and be a governess. There's nothing to hinder that I can see but your own wilfulness. You would get on in life; you would be rich; and then when you'd raised yourself, you might come back and raise the folk here, as your heart's so set on doing."

Deborah turned away and gazed through the window into the twilight. Her cheek was pale with excitement; her heart beat tumultuously. Her imagination pictured to her the life that Mrs. Martin had urged upon her. Oh, how she could love it! What a heaven upon earth it would be to her! And Mrs. Martin was right. She might get rich, and come back and help

her companions here as she never could living amongst them.

Then, as she looked, down the brow of the hill there came a group of young men and women, laughing and jesting with a noisy merriment too boisterous to be seemly or modest.

She listened with a deepening frown; then, as one or two words caught her ear, with a blush.

"I canna do it," said she, turning away from the window with a long-drawn sigh.

"What cannot you do?"

"I cannot leave them. Just listen, Mrs. Martin. I'm all thirsty to break away and leave this weary life, and, as you say, I might come back again. I might, though I doubt it. But be that how it might, I'd not be what they want then. There's good men and women enough above us trying to pull us up; but they canna do it alone. It's from us the work must come. We must help ourselves. And how are we to do that if, when one of us gets a bit of light more than the rest, she leaves them behind, and goes up alone? I cannot but think Providence set me here to do some sort of a work, and I'm frightened to think how near I've been to leaving it."

"Deborah, don't you think Providence meant you to care for your own mind and soul? To use the powers that have been given you, and make the most of them?"

"Do not tempt me to what I long for so much. Many and many's the time I've tried to persuade myself that it's wrong and ungrateful not to raise myself all I can. And I've said to myself, let each one mend one. Surely it's only right to try to get to heaven oneself. But then it's come over me that, if I were ever so good and ever so pure, maybe, when I died, the Lord would say to me, 'Have you brought me no soul but your own?' And if I got in, how would I feel to see my Minnie, maybe, and more of the lasses, outside? I'd not be able to rest for thinking I might have brought them too. No, no. God'll take care of the soul and the mind He's given me, and I—I must work for them."

She pointed to the noisy group disappearing in the distance. The schoolmistress was silent for a little while; then she said:

"I'll say no more, Deborah. Perhaps you are right, though I can't see it as you do. But be careful. I don't think you

quite see to what a life you are condemning yourself."

"Do I not!"

She spoke with a concentrated bitterness of tone that convinced and awed her friend. Presently she rose to go.

"We've not done any work to-night; may I bring my books to-morrow?" she said.

"Aye, and as often as you will."

Just as Deborah reached her own door, a hand was laid lightly on her shoulder.

"Oh, Debby," panted a cheerful voice, "I'm 'most dead wi' runnin' after thee!"

The girl's whole face and demeanour changed as she turned and saw who it was that had accosted her. Her manner brightened and softened wonderfully as she greeted her sister, and said, half playfully and half reproachfully:

"Thou naughty lass! and where hast been so late, Minnie?"

"An' wheer hast been so late, Debby?" mimicked the new comer, who was very like her sister, though her beauty wore an added loveliness from the childlike gaiety of her manner and the light grace of her movements.

Minnie Leighton was one of the acknowledged beauties of Wilton.

"I've been down to see th' schoolmistress," said Deborah gently.

"An aw've bin takin' a walk. Oh, Debby, aw wish thou'd come wi' me some-toimes. It 'ud do thee a deal more good than they musty books. Aw conna think what thou sees in 'em."

"Many a thing. But I'll come wi' thee, dear, whenever thou's a mind to my company."

"To-morrow, then. But, oh, I forgot!"

"What didst forget?"

"Aw promised to go wi' th' rest to-morrow."

"Well, what's i' th' way that I cannot come too?"

"They sayn— thou'lt none be vexed, Debby, if aw tell thee?"

"Am I ever vexed wi' thee, Minnie?"

"They sayn thou'rt so grave—it stons i' th' way o' eaur fun."

"Minnie, wert thou wi' th' lot that went past school to-night?"

"Aye, to be sure. We had a gradely walk. What then?"

"I'll come wi' thee to-morrow, lass," said Deborah decidedly, "an' I'll none spoil sport, neither."

SIMON'S BAY, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

IF the shores of False Bay are sparsely cultivated, inhospitable, and desolate, not very much more can be said for the immediate prospect that greets you, when, after a stiff pull, the top of Red Hill has been gained. From Simon's Berg over to Slangkop on the one hand, and down to the lighthouse on Cape Point on the other, there are only two or three farms of very modest dimensions, De Villiers', pronounced in the low Dutch patois Filgee, and Malherbes, likewise converted into Millarms, at great distances from each other. The general impression is one of intense loneliness, to many a great charm. For miles and miles you can ride and walk, and never meet a human being. A rabbit, or a bird starting up under your feet, and winging its way with a great whirring sound, are the only signs of life in this eerie place; but the climate is so temperate, dry, and healthy, that to sit down under the bits of grey rock that crop up here and there, with a book and cigar, or, better still, a beloved companion, is rest and enjoyment. A botanist can here find many delightful surprises. Delicate heaths which we are accustomed to see reared in hot-houses at home, red, lilac, white, and yellow, with large spikes of wax-like bells, and a few red and green ixias, nestle in the greenest of the clumps, but it is in richer and damper ground, removed at some distance from the sea-breezes, that the fat, lovely Cape bulbs are to be found. Beetles and rare butterflies give a little colour and animation to the scene, but these flats are mostly dry, firm, sandy tracts, dotted with sturdy little plants of "skilpad bessies" (tortoise berries), dear to the heart of the Africander youth, the fruit of which is most refreshing to the wayfarer, and makes a delicious preserve. Few or no trees are found till the shelter of the hills down towards Slangkop Point is reached, when a little verdure creeps down the valley, timid and stunted. It was on a reef inside Slangkop, that H.M.S. Wasp was so nearly wrecked in a thick fog. A few birds reward a keen hunter after a long day's riding, but little in the shape of sport can be obtained on this arid, but pure and delightful moorland. In the neighbourhood of Malherbes farm, small springbok of a graceful, gazelle-like character, and extremely agile habits, are occasionally seen,

and the young officer from the ships in Simon's Bay who has shot one, has indeed stuck a feather in his cap. They are excellent eating, when—like Mrs. Glasse's hare—they are caught.

Turning sharp off to the left on reaching the top of Red Hill, a path leads to the summit of Simon's Berg, seventeen hundred feet high. I have also climbed it from Simon's Town, straight up the face. Worn and honeycombed into the rocky crest are vast caves and galleries, of whose comfortable shelter many a homeless wanderer at home would be thankful. There are pillars, walls, and rooms, with nearly enough space to stand upright in many of them. These are inhabited (and I am bound to say are very "smelly" habitations) by troops of large and ferocious apes, who descend in the night, pick up fruit and chickens, and commit fearful havoc among the gardens. They also hurl down great stones with curiously human malice and cunning, to the terror of passers-by; between Oatlands and Newlands, several people have had very narrow escapes. Two large tigers abode hereabouts, who made perpetual raids upon Hugo's garden, till one of them perished by strychnine, concealed in the dead body of a sheep, and the other decamped to pastures new.

Descending into Simon's Town again, another most pleasant walk is the road leading past the cemetery out to Miller's Point. An English eye will be delighted with the little shady dells you come upon unawares, decorated with the most luxuriant spikes of cream-white arum, with their graceful leaves reaching often to a height of three or four feet. These lovely sub-tropical plants are contemptuously called pig-lilies by the natives, owing to the fondness displayed by that animal for their bulbous roots. At Newlands, nothing is left but the site and foundation of the once magnificent house occupied by the superintendent of the East India Company's service, the short, beautiful turf spoiled with stones, mortar, and rubbish. The principal part of the materials, pillars, capitals, balustrades, together with most of the roofing, was conveyed to Rondebosch at great expense in bullock-waggons, and employed in the building of Belmont, Mr. Ebdon's fine house there. Passing the cheerful homestead of Oatlands, a turn in the road opens out the really charming domain of Rocklands, where human industry, principally that of the Rev. Edward Meredyth, has made of a mere sandy

waste, with occasional damp spots in it, a blooming, lovely, and productive little home, well sheltered from bleak winds by the mountains above, and by a vigorous plantation of silver-trees (*Leucadendron argenteum*) from the sea-winds. For consumptive invalids, unable to live in their own land, no more health-giving, quiet, and lovely nook than Rocklands could be found. The climate is splendid; the sun genial; the air dry; the little town, with every reasonable want supplied, but two miles distant; while on either hand, the whole broad waters of False Bay, from Hanglip to the Strand, roll on, till they break on that craving, inhospitable shore. When nearing Miller's Point, one is apt to fancy that the falling pillars, arches, and stones of a ruined town are lying prostrate on the greensward. They are, however, but the jaws, ribs, and backbones of countless whales of enormous size, captured half a century before, in the once great whaling-field of False Bay, and now lying bleached to snowy whiteness by the sun and wind of many long years. The ribs are still used for fences, and are almost of stony hardness. A tall man can stand upright under several of the jaw-bones. It is curious that whales are, in these days, as seldom seen in False Bay as in England—owing, it is thought, to the invasion of steamers in those once quiet waters. Returning from Miller's Point, the rocks by the beach may be skirted, necessitating a little stiff climbing. In the shallow parts sea-anemones of every colour are to be seen, forming with star-fish, sea-urchins, and many fleshy zoophytes, most interesting natural aquaria.

The dead sleep in the pretty cemetery on a sweet slope of the mountains overlooking the bright, heaving waters of Simon's Bay; a warm sunlight plays upon their graves the whole day long; no noisome exhalations, no dank, unwholesome shade broods over the last resting-place of so many dear to us at home. One is struck by the number of drowned men who sleep there, as if the sea craved with restless eagerness for the bodies of human beings, and then flung them up on the shore as of no further use. In one large walled-in grave, twenty poor sailors of the flagship *Maidstone* lie together, and in most cases the capsizing of boats has been the cause of death. A sad episode is recalled to mind by one tablet, "Sacred to the memory of Assistant-Paymaster Sevecke, R.N." His life was yet another unavailing sacrifice to Dr. Livingstone's over-sanguine hopes of

civilising and Christianising the natives of the Zambesi delta. When going on shore at the treacherous Kongone mouth of the river, in one of the boats of the *Lyra*, charged with Livingstone's despatches, the whaler capsized on the bar, and Mr. Sevecke, with several of the men, was drowned. Three bones attached to his clothes were afterwards recovered on the sands by a search-party from his own ship, the *Boscawen*, and carefully brought down to the Cape in the flagship. I well remember how all the town was moved, when a splendid coffin, containing the three bones, covered with a Union Jack, and followed by the Admiral, Sir Frederick Grey, countless officers and men, and the flagship's band, was landed at the dock-yard jetty. From there the long train slowly passed on foot through the yard, and the open street of the little town, and round the foot of the mountain, the band with muffled drums playing the Dead March in Saul over, and over, and over again, till the cemetery was reached, where a most touching service was read by the Rev. Mr. Fox, before consigning to the grave all that was left of one so loved by his messmates.

On another occasion, despatches and heavy cumbersome goods for Dr. Livingstone's expedition had to be landed at the Kongone. H.M. brigantine *Dart* was therefore ordered to take them. Knowing the dangerous bar well, Mr. McClune, in command of her, called for volunteers to accompany him. Lieutenant Woodruff, a very young officer of the Royal Marines, who belonged to the flagship, and was only taking passage to Simon's Bay in the *Dart*, and six men, gallantly responded to his call. They had crossed the deepest part of the bar, when their boat was lifted on end by the boiling surf, and rolled over and over. Not one of those eight men were ever seen again. The *Dart* lay at anchor, as close as the shallow water allowed, but more than six miles away; the sole officer now remaining in her was a young master's assistant, named Warr, quite a boy. Mounted on the cross-trees of the brigantine, he had the misery of seeing the boat capsize and of being unable to render any assistance. The loss of her commanding officer and six of the best men had nearly unmanned her; but, though so short-handed and inexperienced, the boy's courage never failed, and, after waiting four days in that most desolate place and seeing neither a sail nor a human being, he

resolved to take the ship down to the Cape alone. The Dart was extremely heavily-rigged, with enormous spars, her mainsail large enough for a full-rigged ship. She, however, arrived safely in Simon's Bay, after a most anxious passage, bringing the dreadful news. Young Warr had absolutely no help or counsel, except in steering or pulling the ropes, no one being left but ordinary seamen and boys. He had to keep all the watches and navigate the ship alone. No sooner had he reported his arrival in Simon's Bay than he fell ill with a fever, brought on by the anxieties of such a position. This plucky young fellow had been a Greenwich schoolboy, and afterwards died in China.

Not only did nearly all that unhappy expedition, including my poor friend, Mrs. Livingstone, the good Bishop Mackenzie, Mr. Burrup, and many others, perish miserably of jungle-fever, but twice as many more naval officers and men, whose mission it was to sail the seas and fight the Queen's enemies, met their deaths while merely carrying to and fro and attempting, in obedience to orders, to cross the bar and communicate with the ill-fated expedition.

Curiously enough, the only mention made of these cruel disasters in the various lives and travels of poor Dr. Livingstone is that his "letters and despatches had unfortunately been lost by the capsizing of the boats," an omission, I am sure, he would greatly have regretted.

There is one great drawback at the Cape, to what is otherwise a most delicious and healthful climate, and that is the prevalence of south-easters, continuing as they will do from October to April—the Cape summer—with extraordinary violence and pertinacity for ten days and more at a time. They become at last most wearisome, and the "Cape doctor," as it is called, blows not a little gritty white sand down your throat as you are valiantly struggling out for a walk. The Kloof wind (south-west), occasionally blowing in the Cape winter, is especially dangerous to boats sailing in the bay, owing to the violent and variable squalls which come down from the hills. It is a chilly, rainy wind, productive of cold and sore throat. From May to October (winter), north-westerly winds prevail, but are of much less violence and duration—certainly in Simon's Bay—than the summer gales. It is in Table Bay, owing to the absence of shelter, that a north-wester blows with such fatal violence.

I have seen fifteen strong ships in one morning driven from their anchors, and go on shore on the beach abreast of the Observatory, one over the other, in a vast tangled heap, with frightful loss of life. Simon's Bay is happily very safe from all dangerous winds, and the Cape cargo-boats, with their snug and serviceable rig, may be seen steadily going out in almost any weather with perfect safety. I never saw a cargo-boat capsize, though countless men-of-war's boats came to grief at different times. Those useful launches, known in the Navy as the "De Horsey rig," are adapted from the Cape cargo-boats. There are local and infallible signs of coming wind, which never fail to warn seamen. A heavy cloud-cap of white vapour, lying immovable for many days on the Muysenberg, means a south-easter; if the Hottentot Holland range of mountains is also capped, it will probably last long and be violent. If a light vapour wreathes round and conceals the top of Simon's Berg, it will rain within a very short time.

In winter a fire is most comfortable, though few good houses up the country are provided with fire-places, the Dutch ladies sitting hour after hour with their feet on a pan of charcoal, a most fattening and unpleasant process. The Cape nights are lovely, more beautiful than anywhere else in the world; and with nothing to fear from malaria, exhalations, or anything unwholesome, one may sit out in the cool, dry, sweet-smelling air with impunity. The Cape moonlight is celebrated for its extraordinary brilliance; books with small print may be read without an effort by its light, while for love-making the balmy, quiet Cape night is unequalled. The stars also are brighter than in other climes; the Southern Cross, lying rather on its side as it rises from behind the head of Simon's Berg, is a lovely and brilliant constellation. From the Cape Observatory the stars are more constantly to be seen than from any other.

The waters of False Bay teem with fish. On the first beach there is excellent seine-fishing, consisting of red roman, snoek occasionally, and a sort of red mullet, no more like the red mullet of Portland than a bit of blanket. Snoek is found in great quantities about ten miles off shore, and forms the staple food of the Malays. It is a long Barracouta-like fish, with a smooth, snaky skin, and no scales. Salted and dried it is excellent, but has always the reputation of being a very foul feeder. A

poisonous fish, called toad fish, a bright-coloured, snub-nosed little wretch, crowds round your line as soon as it is down, to the exclusion of all decent fish, with extraordinary pertinacity and desire to be caught. As soon as it is hooked, it blows itself out like a drum, and emits a poisonous fluid; it is certain death to eat of it. Crayfish are excellent, of great size and extremely plentiful, but fish generally about here are coarse and woolly.

The inhabitants of Simon's Bay are of various races and colours—English, Dutch, Malay, Africander, Kaffir, natives of the Mozambique of slave origin, and Kroomen, and a few of the original Hottentots, with an occasional Venus, are still to be seen, though they are fast disappearing. The Kroomen born at Cape Coast, Cape Three Points, and other places in the Bight of Benin, have passed most of their lives in our men-of-war on the West Coast. They bear most curious names, adopted by them, or bestowed upon them in honour of any great personage that may happen to be much talked about at the time of their entrance into the navy—thus, Billy Pitt, Duke of Wellington, King William, Prince Albert, Lord Nelson, were all Kroomen, or boys as they are called, even when grey-headed old men, remarkably like our original type—according to Darwin. They are excellent cooks and labourers, as well as sailors, a merry-hearted, childlike race who never seem to grow old and staid. Hour after hour you will hear them in the dockyard hauling up boats and timber with unfailing spirits and good-humour, chanting the while a most absurd tissue of rubbish, mostly improvised very cleverly from any passing object or person. The burthen of their chant is of this description: "Yard, oh! Yard, oh! Monkey in de yard, oh! Oh—h!" followed by a curious chuckle of amusement at their feeble little jokes.

A great part of the Cape population consists of Malays, who are a very remarkable people, and believed by some learned in biblical lore to be the lost tribe of Israel. They most certainly preserve some Jewish customs and traditions. Malays hold all the building trade in their hands, and are excellent masons. They are also great in freemasonry. Much of the fruit trade, and all the washing, is done by the Malays, who are a very great power at the Cape, though never rising above the small tradesman class, however rich they may be. Neither males nor females engage in domestic service as a rule, though they

are sometimes found as cooks, but trade, lend, barter, and industriously lay pound to pound, much as the Jews do, owning great numbers of horses, waggons, and houses. The Cape Malays are of a light yellow colour, with sharp, half-European, half-Asiatic features, and lank black hair. They are the descendants of some convicts transported from Java in the old Dutch times, when both places belonged to Holland. In religion they are Mahometans, and their great high priests perform the Mecca pilgrimage if possible before they die, but it is looked upon as a melancholy duty to be got through, the miseries of a pilgrimage being almost equal to those of a slaver, disease almost always breaking out owing to the filthy habits of the pilgrims. Though not very strict in the performance of their religious duties, they observe the Ramadan and other sacred seasons, and are most abstemious and sober in their habits; they also abjure pork. The dress of a Malay is clean and of expensive material, consisting of a heavy pagoda-shaped palm-leaf hat, akin to the Chinese head-gear, full white linen sleeves, baggy trousers, and long vest—a costume completed by a gaudy Madras handkerchief wound round their heads.

The women are attired in brilliantly-coloured bodies and trailing skirts, full white sleeves, wooden clogs, and have superb heads of coarse, shiny, black hair, drawn tightly back off their foreheads, twisted into a great knot low down behind, and stuck through with heavy gold-headed pins. They go out in all weather without any covering on the head, sauntering majestically along, heeding neither sun nor rain. The priests are clothed in turbans, shawls, and flowing Eastern robes, with a high pointed cap. We have long had a mission among them, but in several years only one Malay was converted, who was said to have afterwards recanted. They possess most wily tongues, and great powers of argument. The men go to mosque, the women never, not having any souls. The latter have very sharp tongues, and are a great power in the house.

Marriages are celebrated with great pomp and expense, the whole party afterwards driving out in carriages, drawn by six horses, urged to the very top of their speed; dozens of men, women, and children cram into the vehicles, all in the highest condition of hilarity. Though no converts to Christianity are made, a great number of Englishwomen join the ranks of the Malays, cheerfully accepting the no-soul theory,

espousing a well-to-do Malay, and adopting the dress with the sedate manners of the race. A few Englishmen also, who, having fallen in love with a pretty girl, have been obliged by their laws to turn Malay before being allowed to marry her. The children, who are much petted and indulged, freely attend our schools; but honesty is not altogether reputed among their race to be "the best policy."

Small-pox is a dreadful scourge among the Malays, owing to their horror of vaccination, their secret lives, and isolated condition. The existence of the disease is not known till infection has been conveyed far and near, with the most idiotic disregard of the commonest precautions. They will hold wakes and curious rites over the dead, vast numbers of men and women collecting together in the chamber of the departed to mourn and lament. Thus two or three thousand lives are every now and then sacrificed at the Cape, to their habits of superstitious concealment. The Malay burial-ground in Simon's Bay adjoins the English. One is almost amused at the childish and ridiculous little objects which are placed at the head of the flat, low graves. Glass beads, little wax dolls, bits of coloured glass, shells, tinsel, artificial flowers, trinkets of brass and mock stones, bottles of scent and oil, scraps of ribbon, and the veriest rubbish, adorn the last resting-places of the dead, including substantial refreshments for the journey in the case of the newly-buried.

The Malays are excellent and intrepid sailors, managing their curiously-painted sailing-boats with great dexterity. A beloved boat will be painted all the colours of the rainbow in stripes and patches, with two horrible-looking eyes on each bow. Many of the names common among them, such as Emanuel, Lazarus, suggest a Jewish descent.

Simon's Bay is a favourite resort for vessels of the navies of all nations, more especially Russians, who thus break the long voyage between the Amoor river and Cronstadt, putting in for rest and supplies, and making much acquaintance with "Cape Smoke," a spirit as ardent and intoxicating as their own raki. Their sailors have a curious custom of conveying to the top of Red Hill, as soon as possible after their arrival, some large thin sheets of iron. These are propped up, and form a species of iron-clad tent, in the midst of which they kindle a large fire. The iron well-heated, the ashes are raked out, and a Russian or

two steps in, denuded of all clothing, apparently to be baked. Having perspired freely, they rub themselves down, don their baggy garments again, and rather flatter themselves they are well washed!

The Cape is not nearly appreciated at its full value by our own Government, or by intending emigrants; the climate, temperate as it is—dry, healthy and equable—is eminently suited to an English constitution, indeed the pretty Dutch-English town of Caledon has done more wonders for consumptive people in prolonging and cheering their lives for many years than all the doctors in England or Madeira. The soil is fertile, the rains genial, the people most kind and hospitable; there are no bad hurricanes, no earthquakes, not many cobras, no horrible fevers and epidemics, and it ever must be, from its position, one of England's most precious colonial possessions, to be jealously guarded from the bare possibility of capture by any other nation.

Looking back upon eight years spent in Simon's Bay—years chequered by sorrow and joy—I love the desolate hills, and the broad waters of the bay. I love even the cheerful little dockyard, and, more than all, the quiet God's-acre, so sacred to me, and would fain have been able, had it been possible, to revisit the spots where so much happiness came to me—remembered now only affectionately through the mist of years.

WHAT WAS HER STORY?

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ALL good things come to an end, and so at length did Mrs. Campion's dinner. It was never the custom at Kolokythia Lodge for the men to linger long over their wine. With the departure of the hostess disintegration set in, and the guests, as a rule, were too indifferent to their host, and too suspicious of each other, to thoroughly fraternise. To-night, Linburn made the move even earlier than usual.

On reaching the drawing-room they received a smiling welcome from the three married ladies. The governess and her pupils had retired for the night. Linburn flung himself on a sofa beside Mrs. Campion, and resting his flushed face on his hands, prepared to study her at his leisure.

Mrs. Webster sat down to the piano, and began to sing an absurd little song

about a damsel perched upon an impossibly high stile in some "north countrie." Schönbein stood by her side, turning over the leaves. Mrs. Highbury Banks delivered an amusing harangue on the unwillingness of the present generation to perpetrate matrimony. No one made the least pretence of listening to the music, and Mrs. Webster did not expect it. She sang to please herself and her cavalier, and left off or began again as it suited her.

To Linburn the remainder of the evening passed rapidly. It seemed to him that conversation with Mrs. Campion was only just beginning to attain a delightful point of personal interest when someone, going to a window, drew back the curtains, and discovered a white world. During dinner the snow had been falling, and now roof, and path, and road were covered in a thin white mantle. A light wind had cleared away the clouds, the sky was bright with stars, while the moon rising between the frosted branches of an elm-tree opposite shone in on the disordered room, and mixed her silver light with the garishness of lamp and candle.

The guests all came over to the window and expressed their admiration or surprise. As they stood there the slow notes of a distant bell rang out twelve.

"The wind must be in the east," said Campion; "that's Big Ben."

Then there was a talk of departure, and Mrs. Highbury Banks was the first to go, taking Schönbein with her in her brougham. She much regretted she had not a third place to offer Kerr, for although he had done absolutely nothing to ingratiate himself with her, she, too, was smitten with his "masculine beauty."

Kerr said good-night, and Linburn, after an interval, followed him contentedly enough down into the hall. That interval had comprised a tender passage with Mrs. Campion in the conservatory, where they had lingered a moment to admire the view. He had only pressed her hand, and she but touched with pointed fingers the gardenia in his coat; still, this had given him an "emotion," and he was perfectly satisfied.

Linburn was as much the prey of "emotions" as are some other men of gout or of dyspepsia. The blotchiest Japanese fan would send a rush of sentiment across his soul, which obliged him to sit down—at least, so he said.

In the hall he found Campion and Webster, assisting a servant to assist Kerr on with his coat.

"How are you going?" said the host. "I don't think you'll find a cab up this way, but you are sure to in the High Street, if you don't mind walking through the lane. I can let you out at the back, you know."

They followed him into the dining-room, and he, unbolting the window-shutters, preceded them down a flight of stone steps into a narrow garden. He unlocked a little door, and they all stepped into the lane together.

Here it was not unpleasant walking, for the ground was dry and hard. The wind, which had blown away the threatened snow-storm, had also blown the fallen snow from the path, and swept it in loose drifts against the palings.

"Well, good-night," said Campion, addressing himself to Kerr, and ignoring Linburn as much as possible. "Straight along, you know. You can't mistake it, and I advise you to walk fast, for it's deuced cold."

"I wish I saw some chance of getting home," complained Webster in thick, rich tones which suggested that he might, perhaps, find some physical difficulty in the feat; "but my wife has retired to talk confidences with Mrs. Campion in her bedroom, and the Lord only knows when they'll finish. Don't let Mrs. Banks persuade you into matrimony. You are a thousand times better off as you are."

Then they said "Good-night" again, and the last thing the young men heard was Campion's voice proposing a drink of something hot, and Webster's cheery acquiescence.

For some moments Linburn walked along, immersed in his own pleasant thoughts. He did not feel cold, but, on the contrary, lifted his hat to let the wind blow in upon his long hair. He laughed softly, as he repeated to himself some of his speeches to Mrs. Campion which he thought particularly good. Then it suddenly struck him that Kerr was very silent, and then he remembered that he had been so all the evening. The annoyance Linburn had felt during dinner returned, and he spoke with some vexation:

"I do think, Julius, that for my sake you might have paid Mrs. Campion a little more attention, although you yourself might have found a study of her profitable. Her character is very complex"—here he sighed—"and I counted on your assistance in unravelling it. But I flatter myself I have this evening obtained the clue."

He fingered his moustache pensively, and was lost in retrospection, until Kerr's conduct again occurred to him, and he said sharply:

"What is the matter with you? I can't make you out to-night. Mrs. Webster must have a nice opinion of you. I think you neglected her, and you have hurt my feelings. You seem to imply that my friends are not worth being pleasant to?"

Kerr's answer was unexpected.

"What do you know of the woman who sat next to you at dinner?" he said.

"Mdlle. Lecœur, the governess, do you mean?" Linburn asked in genuine surprise.

"Yes. Who is she? What is her story?"

"Her story?" repeated Linburn. "Why, what should her story be? She has always been a governess, I imagine, and there is nothing very romantic in that."

Kerr laughed oddly.

"Do you know, Linburn, that you are one of the most conventional men in London? It is in vain that you wear your hair long and your collars low. All your rhapsodies about Japanese tea-kettles, emotions, and soul-waves have not opened your eyes to anything outside your own narrow groove. Because this woman is a governess, you have never thought it worth your while to look at her, and yet she carries a tragedy within her breast which could have extinguished with its gloom all the lights and all the laughter we have left behind."

Linburn stood still with amazement. There was something so sombre about Kerr's manner that it arrested the flow of complacent warmth circling round his heart, and he began to be sensible of the cold.

"You complain that I was silent and pre-occupied," said Kerr; "I had good reason to be so. I was following that woman's history as she herself was following it, from the dark beginnings down to the unknown darker end. I could tell you some curious mental experiences I have had this evening, only to-morrow I shall probably regret not having held my tongue."

"You are coming out in a new light," said Linburn jestingly, "and developing a vein of romance, up to now only too effectually concealed. Is it due to Campion's wine? or Campion's wife? For it is more reasonable to suppose that she should have influenced you in spite of yourself, than that you should have drawn sources of

inspiration from a pale, thin lady of forty."

"And, as usual, you are arguing from false premises," replied Kerr. "The particular way in which a person or thing affects you, is no criterion for the manner in which it may affect the rest of the world. I drank very little wine, and the only conscious sentiment which Mrs. Campion aroused in me was a desire to see somebody dust the powder off her face, on which it lay an inch thick."

Kerr was silent for some seconds before he spoke again.

"Mdlle. Lecœur, on the contrary," he continued, "awakened in my mind a curious train of thought, which I am tempted to share with you, less for your own gratification, than in the hopes of shaking off the disagreeable sensation which oppresses me."

Linburn began to feel uncomfortable. While delighting in fictitious sentiment, real tragedy of any sort was abhorrent to his pleasure-loving nature. He shivered and drew his furred and wadded cloak closer round him. The cold was very great. Through the loose and broken palings on the right were seen glimpses of a desolate park, whose moonlit lawns were interspersed by groups of ancient trees. Heaven and earth were filled with a white light from moon, stars, and snow. Only Kerr's voice, and the sound of their feet grinding down the gravel disturbed the silence of the hour.

"My first impression," said Kerr, "on entering the drawing-room this evening, was of too much light, too much colour, too much noise. The little golden lady to whom Mrs. Campion introduced me was all glitter, from the diamonds in her ears to the diamonds on her shoes. Her mind seemed to have caught the infection. Every word she said was with a view to dazzle. I had not talked with her five minutes before I was bored to death. My eyes involuntarily seeking some point of repose, fell on a lady standing at a table a little apart from anyone else. The pensive quiet of her attitude, the uniform darkness of her gown, were attractive after the sharp colours and noisy gaiety of the rest of the company."

"The first few seconds I looked at her were enjoyable. Her face was turned from me, but I could see that the lines of cheek and throat had once been charming. There was something in her figure, in the droop of her heavily-braided head, in the languor of

her long, lithe arms and hands, that fascinated me; but presently the feeling of pleasurable repose she had awakened in me was replaced by an odd sense of uneasiness. I tried to analyse the reason. I could not determine whether I had seen her before, or whether she merely recalled to me some other person or some picture.

"Mrs. Webster, no doubt, wondered at my preoccupation and began to form that unfavourable opinion of me which I afterwards did so much to confirm. I could not keep my eyes long from the woman by the table. Her limbs were so motionless, her attitude so dreamy, that the odd fancy struck me the soul had escaped, and was wandering, perhaps, thousands of miles away, while the body patiently waited its return. This notion was dispelled by the movement of her hands, mechanically half-opening and closing a black fan which she held. Did you ever notice her hands, Linburn? They are long and white, and well-cared-for, but to me they are repulsive-looking. They are compressed and very narrow, as though they had never been exercised in honest work, or extended to help a fellow-creature. A hand is often a better index of character than a face. In the lines of that woman's hand is neither candour nor generosity. She would take much and give nothing. But the fingers and nails are still more typical; though the former are slender, the points are no thinner than the roots, and the finger-tip, instead of turning slightly upwards, as we see in examples by Canova, has a contrary inclination; while the nail, which is large and flat, is depressed at the extremity downward and inward. Her history is written on her hand. A trifling scratch on that satin-smooth skin would have excited once the deepest pity in the owner, but those pallid fingers would steep themselves in blood, if there were no other way to preserve the ease and security which her soul loves."

Kerr's voice was sending a sincerer thrill of emotion along Linburn's spinal chord than ever a Japanese vase had done. The power of the wine, the excitement of the conversation, were clearing off his mind. The memory of Mrs. Campion, with her coaxing voice and encouraging smiles, began to fade away, with all the other memories of the evening, into a misty background, against which he vainly endeavoured to paint the figure of Miss Lecœur, whom he had seen so often, and so indifferently.

"I don't understand," he said in a troubled voice; "I have never noticed her in the way you mean. I seem unable even to recall her face."

"Let me aid you," said Kerr. "Judging from her figure alone, she might be a woman in her twenties; but in her haggard face, among the wrecks of lost beauty, is the experience of—who shall say how many years? Do you not see her narrow forehead, with its heavy crown of hair? Her dark and fugitive eyes with the violet stains beneath, caused by unceasing tears? The lips that have once been lovely, but now are wasted and colourless through pain?"

"As I passed her on my way to dinner I accidentally brushed her dress, and my touch brought her back from the dark land in which she was wandering. She started, and her fan fell to the ground. When I returned it to her, and she murmured a word of thanks, her eyes met mine, then looked away; but in that second's glance, I saw such hopeless misery as to give me the feeling of blood-curdling which people tell of. I looked at Mrs. Webster, curious to know if she, too, had experienced a like sensation, but her silly little face was as brilliant as ever, and all her mind was given to the proper adjustment of her golden train.

"'Who was that lady in black?' I asked her as we entered the dining-room, and she answered, as you did, carelessly: 'Oh, that was only the governess!' She, too, had never thought it worth while to study the expression or the character of a person in that position. However, she told me one or two things about Mdlle. Lecœur—that she is very silent, that she is quite engrossed with her duties, that she prefers not being noticed. This is a convenient theory, greatly favoured by ladies concerning their inferiors.

"But if that woman is silent, it is because she dare not speak of that which lies nearest to her heart. If she is pre-occupied, it is not with her pupils. Her pupils mean to her nothing more than food and lodging. If she is unaccustomed to the society she meets here, it is because she has moved at one time among men to whom her will was law, and once, at least, passionate love-vows have been breathed into her ear. She lives in the world of her past, but her lips are sealed concerning it; only in the awful land of dreams she moves through it again. I can imagine the morning agony of her face,

when she rises to begin another day. For if the nights are torture, the days are worse in their monotonous quiet, when she must sit for hours with her dark eyes decorously bent over her book, while her heart is on fire! She would give worlds to begin again, to play her cards differently; to start once more with her lost youth, her bought experience. She would not be better—she would be wiser.

"Perhaps it was on some such night as this, when the sky was full of stars, and the earth was wrapped in snow—snow, not as we see it here, but lying many feet deep, in a northern land, that she took the first step towards her doom. And now she cannot see the snow without recalling every incident of that night and its fatal consequences, for it drew her on to the necessity of a crime, the memory of which gives her no rest. I read in her eyes the despair that prompted it, in her curious hands the violence that carried it out, in her pallid mouth the burden of silence which has oppressed her ever since. Her heart has become a chamber of horrors, from which there remains but one door of doubtful escape."

Linburn was completely sobered and considerably astonished. There was something eerie in the way Kerr talked, whose usual cold common-sense gave additional colour to the strangeness of this outbreak.

"What unutterable ideas you have!" said Linburn with a nervous shudder; "but you are sadly wanting in chivalry to the lady. You have only met her once, yet are ready to swear away her character because she has a melancholy expression and ugly hands."

The young men had now reached a point where the lane suddenly increased to twice its previous width. The boundary-wall turned at right angles with itself, and after running a couple of yards turned again, and was replaced by an open iron railing, behind which the park stretched away in what seemed illimitable snowy vistas. Kerr stood still, and leaning against the railings, looked into the misty distance.

"You will acquit me of any very vivid belief in the supernatural?" he asked.

Linburn smiled a sad but reassuring smile.

"You believe in nothing that is incapable of demonstration in the lecture-room," he answered.

"Well, then, don't laugh when I tell you that to-night I saw into that woman's mind—at least, that is the only way I can

account for the phenomenon I am going to describe. By her side at dinner there stood a child. I knew then that the snow had fallen, for half-melted snow-flakes were trickling down its head and neck. I never could see its face, which was constantly turned towards hers, but with its little ill-shaped withered fingers it stroked her hand, or drew towards her her knife. If you had observed her at all you would have seen that the whole of dinner she played with her table-knife; sometimes balancing it idly between her fingers, sometimes feeling stealthily along its blade; but I saw it was the child who guided her hand, and when she would have put it out of reach, the child drew it back again. You remember once passing her a knife of your own? You were unconsciously mesmerised by her thoughts, but to me it seemed that the child was stretching an arm across your plate, and so close to you that I could swear its sleeve had touched you. Once, her fan or her napkin slipping, she bent sideways to restore it, and the creature instantly transferred its hand from her wrist to her throat, drawing its fingers across the skin with a slow caressing movement. If anyone spoke to her, and thus disturbed the current of her ideas, she became free, the child was no longer there; directly she sank back into abstraction, it stood again by her side, stroking her wrist, and looking up into her face. When the ladies left the dining-room it went too, holding on to a fold of her gown.

"A queer hallucination, was it not?" said Kerr, after a pause, during which, for once in his life, Linburn found absolutely nothing to say. "You will understand my reluctance to speak of it. To-morrow by daylight I shall inevitably appear to myself either a madman or a fool. And yet, after all, it may be merely a case of pronounced thought-reading; the fixed idea which she dwells on so persistently, that it has become for her a visible presence, may through sympathy, or magnetism, or whatever you like to call it, have become visible to me also. At least I have told you faithfully what I imagined I saw, and you can judge for yourself of my state of sanity. I was so engrossed in reconstructing her miserable story that I admit I lost sight of my duties as a guest."

Linburn was listening with strained attention; mingled with Kerr's last phrases he had caught the sound of footsteps hurrying towards them. Round the angle of the hall appeared a man, hatless and breathless. It was Mr. Webster, and was

it the moonlight which made his rubicund face appear so distorted and pale?

"I thought I should overtake you," he said, addressing himself to Kerr in odd fluttered tones, the very ghost of his former hearty voice. "Someone remembered you were a doctor. They have sent elsewhere, too, but I thought I might overtake you first. An awful thing has happened up at Campion's. Mdlle. Lecœur—poor unhappy woman—"

There was no need for him to make that ghastly sign with his hand. Looking into each other's eyes the two men knew what had occurred without speaking. The story of her life had gone down with her to the grave.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.

NOT very many years ago, within the recollection, indeed, of middle-aged men, the taste for music in England, although gradually increasing, was still comparatively in its infancy, and, as far as the masses were concerned, to all intents and purposes a dead letter. There was certainly a traditional reverence, warming into a temporary enthusiasm on the recurrence of triennial festivals, for Handel, and a growing respect, fostered by the precept and example of Charles Hallé, for the genius of Beethoven; but the votaries of these masters were mainly limited to the frequenters of the Philharmonic and Exeter Hall; the public in general knew little about either, and cared less. We had two opera-houses, more or less well attended according to the success or failure of the last imported vocalist, but regarded rather as a necessary accompaniment to the London season than from any purely artistic point of view; the chief object of the subscribers being to show themselves in their stalls or boxes on certain nights of the week, with the placid consciousness of having done the correct thing. Those were the days when barrel-organs revelled in *Ah che la Morte* and the Bohemian Girl; when the ballads of Claribel were on every piano, and Wagner was the "bête noire" of classical irreconcilables; when the slightest departure from established rules was looked upon as an unpardonable heresy, and the daring innovations of Liszt and Berlioz were contemptuously stigmatised as cacophany.

Who would then have believed or even admitted the possibility of a change such

as a few short years have brought with them, or in his wildest flight of imagination have anticipated so complete a realisation of the Jerroldian motto: "Time works wonders?" Had we then been told that the simple announcement of a symphony by some new light of the modern school, or the reappearance of some popular instrumentalist, would one day suffice to fill the Crystal Palace Concert Room or St. James's Hall to overflowing, should we not have shrugged our shoulders in polite incredulity, and inwardly laughed our informant to scorn? And yet such things are; we may marvel at the transformation, but it is nevertheless an accomplished fact, "which," as the song says, "nobody can deny." Within the last decade music has become not merely an attraction but a necessity; it is no longer exceptionally cultivated by the few, but has little by little enlisted and retained the sympathies of the many; nor, as far as can be judged by appearances, is its influence likely to decrease. There are, of course, and always will be, differences of opinion as to the merits or demerits of any particular school; and much yet remains to be done before we can fairly lay claim to the faculty of recognising talent wherever it is to be found; but that there is a decided improvement in this respect it is impossible to deny. Unless, indeed, people frequent musical gatherings simply because it is the fashion to do so, and voluntarily undergo the infliction of listening to a performance they neither understand nor appreciate, which is scarcely credible, we may safely conclude that the closely-packed audiences periodically congregated together have nothing in common with Panurge's sheep, but—whether the inducement be a symphony, a sonata, or a ballad "*olla podrida*"—consult their own taste, and "go in" for Raff, Brahms, or Mr. Molloy as the fancy prompts them. Music, therefore, being clearly an established institution among us, it is possible that the following anecdotal reminiscences of some of its chief interpreters, selected from authentic and by no means generally known sources, may not be considered uninteresting.

On one of the last appearances of Beethoven in public, he was announced to play a new work of his composition for piano and orchestra. It having been reported, and truly as it turned out, that, owing to his increasing deafness he would seldom be again heard in a concert-room, the attendance was naturally large, and the

reception of the composer, when he took his place at the instrument, was, most enthusiastic. By some unaccountable freak of imagination, however, he fancied himself officiating as conductor, and on coming to a "fortissimo" passage suddenly crossed his arms, and let them go right and left with such force as to send the candles on each side of the piano flying about the room. Irritated by this interruption, but happily unconscious of the merriment he had excited, he recommenced playing; two boys, candle in hand, having meanwhile by way of precaution been stationed beside the instrument. On the recurrence of the passage in question he performed the same manœuvre as before, and although one of the candle-bearers prudently kept himself out of harm's way, the other, less fortunate, was literally knocked head over heels. This time the mirth of the audience knew no bounds, and Beethoven, in a transport of fury, after venting his rage on the piano by entirely demolishing half-a-dozen notes, rose abruptly from his chair, and without taking the slightest notice of anyone present, strode indignantly out of the room, leaving his astounded fellow-musicians to propitiate the public as best they might.

From 1829 to 1860, with few exceptions, Meyerbeer passed the summer months every year at Spa. An eye-witness thus describes him: "He was invariably dressed in an ill-fitting black frock-coat, with a black silk neckcloth wound several times round his throat, high and stiff shirt-collars, and tight trousers with straps. His gloves were many sizes too large for him, and he wore a tall silk hat falling not over gracefully on the nape of his neck. He always carried a huge cotton umbrella under his left arm when he didn't use it as a walking-stick. When on foot, he shambled along with a tottering step as if he were blind; but his usual mode of locomotion was an insecure seat on a donkey, his legs dangling almost on the ground, in which guise he might regularly be seen of an afternoon in the Allée du Marteau."

Jules Janin used to relate with great glee that during his stay at Spa, on returning from an excursion in the neighbourhood, he asked his servant if anyone had called. "Nobody worth speaking of," was the contemptuous answer; "only the queer old fellow on a donkey with a large umbrella!" Among the composer's peculiarities was a horror of cats, the mere sight of one throwing him into a nervous fit. He was, as a rule, silent in company, and

disliked being brought in contact with inquisitive people. One of these, meeting him while he was enjoying a solitary "constitutional" in the Champs Elysées, fastened on him like a leech; and, anxious to have the latest intelligence from the fountain head as to the progress of the long-expected *Africaine*, asked him point-blank if it were nearly ready. "Monsieur," coolly replied Meyerbeer, "the Champs Elysées are open to everyone, but my secrets are not like the Champs Elysées;" and turned on his heel, leaving the indiscreet questioner no wiser than he was before.

As a memorial of his frequent visits to Spa, a charmingly picturesque promenade artistically laid out near the spring of the Géronstère by order of the municipality, records the titles of the composer's principal works. A tiny waterfall like a silver thread is called "La Cascade de Ploërmel;" a flight of steps composed of roughly-hewn stones represents "L'Escalier du Prophète;" a wooden bridge is dignified by the name of "Le Pont de Marcel;" and two recesses, where benches are placed for the accommodation of visitors, are respectively denominated "Le Repos de Pierre et Catherine" and "Le Repos de Raoul."

Meyerbeer's fidus Achates in Paris was a little Frenchman, Gouin by name, whose duty it was to act as intermediary with managers and journalists, to depreciate the works of rival composers, and to be perpetually at his patron's beck and call. One evening at the Opera, perceiving that the latter was engaged in conversation with a certain Chaudé, an intimate friend of the director of the (then) Académie Royale de Musique, he modestly remained in the background until the interview was at an end. Presently Meyerbeer, turning round in search of his satellite, beckoned to him to approach.

"Gouin!" began the maestro, with a pronounced nasal twang, "the man I have just been talking to is a very intelligent fellow."

Gouin signified his assent by a bow.

"He has a high opinion of my *Prophète*."

"No wonder."

"And enquired particularly about my *Africaine*."

"Very natural."

"And yet I never saw him before. How do you call him?"

"M. Chaudé."

"Has he anything to do with the Opera?"

"A great deal."

"Ah! Who and what is he?"

After a moment's reflection, his companion replied in a confidential tone, but loud enough to be heard by those around him:

"He is the manager's Gouin."

When Adolphe Adam came to London, in order to superintend the production of his *Postillon de Longjumeau*—charmingly sung, by the way, by that most agreeable and sympathetic vocalist, Miss Rainforth—his entire ignorance of English caused him no little embarrassment; and he used to relate an amusing anecdote of his interview with an apothecary equally unskilled in French. Neither of them being able to understand a word the other said, the composer bethought himself of trying Latin, and enquired as classically as he could how often he ought to take certain pills that had been prescribed for him.

"*Capiendum totâ nocte*," gravely replied the chemist.

"I was horrified," said Adam, "at the thought of passing the whole night in swallowing pills, and applied to my physician, who laughingly assured me that the apothecary's Latin intended to signify, 'to be taken every evening.'"

While Halévy—the most conscientious of musicians—was putting the finishing touch to his *Mousquetaires de la Reine*, he heard someone in the courtyard of the house where he lived singing an air which seemed familiar to him. On listening attentively, he recognised it as one of his latest inspirations for the new work, and flew into a violent rage, accusing himself of having involuntarily appropriated the idea of another composer. Ringing for his servant, he bade him ascertain who the singer was, and presently he learnt that he was one of the workmen employed in painting the outside of the house.

"Ask him to come up here," said Halévy; and, on the man's appearance, enquired where he had first heard the air he had been singing.

"*Ma foi, monsieur*," replied the individual addressed, "I picked it up the other day out of a piece they were rehearsing at the *Opéra Comique*, while we were repainting the interior."

"Ah!" said Halévy, with a sigh of relief, "you have an excellent memory; but," he added, half in soliloquy, "I was terribly afraid that mine was a better one!"

Among the innumerable visitors to Rossini's villa, at Passy, was a certain Italian marquis, an amateur musician of no particularly good repute, who continually pestered the maestro for an autographic recommendation of his compositions, on the plea that he was a poor man, and that such a testimonial would materially increase their sale. Wornied by his importunities, the author of *Guillaume Tell* at last consented, and complied with the request as follows:

"I have a very agreeable recollection of the Marquis de S——'s music."

"G. ROSSINI."

This passport to fame was, of course, triumphantly exhibited by the recipient, and one of the writer's friends, happening to see it, enquired how he could possibly have expressed a favourable opinion of music which was a barefaced imitation of his own.

"Perhaps that is why I like it," replied Rossini with a twinkle in his eye. "It is always pleasant, you know, to recognise an old acquaintance."

One of the many postulants for his approbation was a young musician, who brought him a funeral march of his composition in memory of Meyerbeer, lately dead. Rossini looked through it attentively.

"Not bad," he said, "but it would have been still better if Meyerbeer had written it in memory of you."

The same irrepressible humourist briefly summed up his opinion as to the relative merits of Mendelssohn and Wagner by saying that, whereas the former had composed "songs without words," the latter had only written "words without songs."

Offenbach's passion for roulette was proverbial. When his *Princesse de Trébizonde* was produced at the *Baden Theatre*, the major part of the liberal honorarium received for it speedily returned to M. Dupressoir's coffers through the medium of the croupier's rake.

"If this goes on," dryly remarked Maitre Jacques to a fellow-sufferer, while their respective stakes were being swept away, "I shall soon not have a note left."

"You are luckier than I am," ruefully observed his companion, "for your head is full of them."

"That may be," retorted Offenbach, "but, unfortunately, they don't pass current at the roulette."

During his stay there, I remember his

exhibiting with great delight to a circle of Parisian journalists the washing-bill of a local laundress, evidently desirous of displaying her proficiency in the Gallic tongue; one item of which especially fascinated him.

"How do you think she has spelt '*trois paires de chaussettes*?' " he asked one after another. "You'll never guess, if you try for a week;" and, extracting from his pocket-book the document in question, he handed it round with a broad grin of intense enjoyment. It ran thus:

"3 pères cho 7."

During Weber's short sojourn in Paris, on his way to London in 1826, two things appear principally to have caught his fancy, Boieldieu's new opera, *La Dame Blanche*, and the excellence of the oysters. Writing of the former to Winkler, he bids him have it translated, put on the stage by "*Musje*" Marschner, and played as soon as possible, saying:

"Such a comic opera has never been composed since the *Figaro*."

In a notice of Wagner, recently published in Germany, the following anecdote is related of one of his visits to Cologne. At the hotel where he was staying, the best suite of rooms were occupied by a Prussian General, who had arrived on a tour of inspection. One evening, while at work in his solitary chamber, the sound of music immediately under his window struck the composer's ear. It was doubtless a serenade in his honour, and he naturally felt gratified by the flattering attention. When it was over, he opened the window, and was beginning to express his thanks to the performers in well-chosen terms, when, to his surprise and confusion, his harangue was interrupted by a voice from below rudely bidding him hold his tongue, and intimating, amid roars of laughter from the assembled spectators, that the compliment was not intended for him, but for the General!

The only French musician for whom Wagner appears to have entertained a real friendship was Victor Massé, then holding the important post of *Chef des Chœurs* at the Opera, and one of the few Parisian appreciators of the foredoomed *Tannhäuser*. The other principal composers were either hostile or indifferent, and the critics, almost without exception, dead against the new comer. The latter's great crime, however, in the opinion of the Jockey Club, was his very natural refusal to permit the interpolation of a ballet, and one of that body

gravely justified his share in the disturbance which took place on the third and last performance of the work by saying:

"If the piece had been allowed to stand on its own merits, it might have had a run, and how could we possibly have shown ourselves in the '*foyer*' without even a '*rat*' to talk to!"

The well-known pianist, Leopold de Meyer, is the hero of an anecdote which, "*se non è vero, è ben trovato*." He was playing some years ago before an Archduke of Austria, and in his anxiety to please his illustrious auditor, exerted himself so strenuously that he literally perspired at every pore. At the conclusion of the concert, the Archduke deigned to express a wish that the artist should be presented to him.

"Monsieur," blandly remarked his Imperial Highness, "I have heard Thalberg (a pause, and a low bow from the pianist), "I have heard Liszt" (another pause, and a still lower bow); "but I never yet met with anyone" (a third pause, and a quasi-genuflection on the part of Leopold de Meyer), "who perspired as you do!"

MERMAIDS.

WHEN, in olden days, storm-tost sailors returned to their homes, no tales were more marvellous—even in a wonderful budget—than those they narrated of the strange creatures which basked in southern seas. Their audience was as yet unspoiled by the everyday instalments of more wonderful fact and fiction which their great-grandchildren find in the daily newspaper, and hung with interest by the winter fire-side and in the gloaming of a summer's night on the narrative of the returned wanderer, who told of distant ports and foreign ways, dangerous voyages, uncertain winds, and peril from famine or from war. But most of all they delighted to hear those legends of the secrets of the sea in telling which the traveller was himself more deeply moved than even when he told those impressive, and sometimes gruesome, tales which boasted the attraction of personal participation in their wonders.

Belief in the sea-serpent is not yet extinct. Every year we hear of him, and generally when we have most time on our hands to think of him—say in August or September. The crew of some ship (often American) is reported to have seen with astonishment and dismay a great sea-

monster disporting himself on the surface of the waves. Sometimes an attempt at detailed description and measurement is made. But although it is not impossible that in the immense leagues of water-covered world there may still be some great creatures which have not yet been scientifically observed and described, the proof of the mariner's sea-serpent is still lacking. The ship in which are the observers is always too distant or passes too swiftly to allow very accurate observations to be made. The sea-serpent, or rather, some undescribed marine monster of a nearly extinct kind, may exist, but we still want confirmation. The Challenger—on the look-out for marvels—saw it not.

But of the mermaid, what is to be said? She rose out of the water with lovely face and bust, and long shining hair—sometimes she combed her hair and gazed at her dazzling reflection in a hand or looking glass; but only her body was human; from the waist downwards she was a fish, with fish's scales and tail. What of her? We propose to bring together here some notes from the literatures of various peoples as to this strange being.

We may begin with the story of a Scottish mermaid, who anticipated the medical women of this century in her desire to give sound advice. A young woman died of consumption in Renfrewshire, in that long-past age which we call "once upon a time." Her funeral passed along the high-road by the Clyde above Port Glasgow, and as it passed, a mermaid rose from the Clyde, and said:

If they wad drink nettles in March,
And eat muggins in May,
Sae mony braw maidens
Wadna gang to the clay.

This was, for the times, sensible advice, for both mugwort (or muggins) and nettles were valued and largely used by our prudent forefathers. The roots of mugwort used to be collected on St. John's Day. The Saxon leech-books say it puts away madness. Nettles are still used in agricultural districts, or were used until very recently, and tea made from nettle-tops is said in Derbyshire to cure nettle-rash. Another mermaid who dwelt in Galloway found a lover sighing for his mistress, who, like the Port Glasgow damsel, suffered from consumption, and thus bid him good cheer.

Wad ye let the bonnie Mary die i' your hand,
And the mugwort flowering i' the land?

He administered the mugwort-juice to

his fair, and she was restored to health. The Galloway mermaid was more useful than she of the Clyde, but perhaps she had less foul waters to struggle through.

In the curious Scotch chapbook, *The Comical Sayings of Paddy from Cork*, which is attributed to Dugald Graham, the skellat bellman of Glasgow, we find the mermaidens in very odd company. "Them that have no money to pay the priest for a pardon," said Paddy to his neighbour Tom, "or those who are drowned or die by themselves in the fields without a priest, are lost, and sent away as blackguard scoundrels to wander up and down, while the world stands among the brownies, fairies, mermaids, sea-devils, and water kelpies."*

But, indeed, if all these tales were true, what good could be said of the mermaid? Think of the story of Maurice Connor, the Irish piper. Maurice was blind, but like the piper in Redgauntlet, he was not the less a man of remarkable skill and fame. Like his German rival, the Pied Piper, who worked such havoc in Hamelin town, he played a magical air; whence he had obtained and learned it no one knew. But, whenever he began to play, old men and young maids, grey matrons and lusty youths, began to caper and dance, and continued to do so until the music ceased. One day Maurice went to the sea-shore and piped there, and all the fish jumped and leapt in their desire to be near the magic music. Maurice, however, had wooed his fate. "Up came a mermaid and whispered to Maurice of the charms of the land beneath the sea, and the blind piper danced after her into the salt sea, followed by the fish, and was never seen more."† Here the mermaid caught the man. In the usual course of these stories the man catches the mermaid. He sees her disporting herself by the shore, and secures some article belonging to her; the mermaid becomes a beautiful woman, and lives with him; but, whenever she obtains possession of her property, she vanishes once more and for ever in the sea. Thus, from Shetland we have a tale of a young man of Uist, who, one moonlight evening, as he walked by the shore of a voe, or small bay, saw, to his surprise, a number of people dancing on the shore, and near them lay several seal-skins. All the dancers seized their skins and vanished at his approach, save one whose skin he

* "Collected Writings of Dugald Graham," Vol. ii., p. 201.

† Baring Gould, "Curious Myths," pp. 432, 433.

had time to conceal. The owner was a lovely sea-girl, who implored him to return to her her seal dress, as without it she could not return to her brethren below the water. But the young man was full of love, and obdurate, and at last, to make the best of her lot, the maiden consented to marry her captor. They lived happily many years, and several children were born, whose only trace of marine descent was a thin web between their fingers, and a bend in their hands, resembling, says Keightley (*Fairy Mythology*, page 170), that of the fore-paws of a seal, "distinctions which characterise the descendants of the family to the present day." But the mother was often sad, and would wander down to the shore, and converse in an unknown tongue with a large seal which made its appearance when a certain signal was given. One day one of the children brought to his mother a curious prize he had found behind a stack. It was her lost seal-skin. She had no hesitation as to what was to be done. It was hard to leave her children, but she must go quickly if she was to escape before her husband regained possession of the skin. She kissed her children fondly, and hastened to the shore. In a few minutes the husband entered his house, and when he heard what had occurred, he hurried to the beach, but just in time to see his wedded partner of so many years take the form of a seal and leap into the sea. She was met by the large seal, and, as she turned away with him, she called to the disconsolate lover on the rock: "Farewell, and may all good fortune attend you! I loved you well while I was with you, but I always loved my first husband better." And, so saying, she disappeared. This tale of a magic dress is very familiar to all those who have studied popular tales, and the stories are usually grouped under the subject-title of the swan-maidens.

A variant of the Shetland tale is given us in an Italian story of a youth, who, in the reign of King Roger of Sicily, obtained possession of a wonderfully beautiful sea-maiden. A son was born of the marriage. But from the moment of her capture onwards, the mermaid was dumb. This greatly grieved her husband; and one day, when he had been jeered at and provoked by his companions, who said he had married no woman but a spectre, he commanded his wife to speak to him, and threatened to kill their son before her eyes if she refused. Then the patient,

dumb spectre spake, but only to tell him that, by forcing her to speak, he had lost a good wife; then she vanished. Some years afterwards, when the boy was playing with other boys on the shore, his mother appeared and took him into the sea, where he was—so runs the story—drowned; but in the true story of fairy-tales we may rather hope he is with his sea-mother, "in the branching jaspers under the sea."

In the south-west of Ireland the story is still told of one Shea, who won a mermaid for wife, and kept her so long as he retained the talisman—in this case, a cap—a somewhat unusual article for a mermaid. She escaped at last, and was more like her Italian relative than like her Scottish, for she retained a grudge against her captor and all of his name. Every Shea who ventures to a certain spot in Dingle Bay will be drowned, for there the Shea of tradition met the mermaid. "My informant," says Mr. Nutt, in 1883, "would not venture there, 'not for Dinish, if it turned into gold,' for, as he justly said, 'life is shweeter than money.'"

But some mermaids are more tender-hearted. Andersen tells of a Danish sea-nymph, who saves a prince's life in a shipwreck, and, for love of him, leaves her native element. She is with him always, till he weds a princess, and then her heart breaks, and she becomes an elf. And who that has read De la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*—the reading of which, despite critics of too harsh judgment, is an epoch in a man's literary life—can forget the story of that interview where the neglected water-nymph seeks her false knight, Hildebrand, and kisses him to death. Mermaids who love mortal men have indeed as hard fates as mortal men who love mermaids. There is a long and curious story told in South Småland, which Thorpe calls *The King's Son and Messeria*. The King's son, in fulfilment of a vow made by his mother, is obliged to dwell for a time under the sea with a mermaid, who sets him the curious and difficult tasks which, in our British fairy-tales, the cruel stepmother gives to the helpless, charming step-daughter. Thus he has to wash white yarn black and black yarn white; he has to separate the barley from the wheat in a barrel where they are mixed together; he has to cleanse the stalls of a hundred oxen—stalls which have never been cleansed

* "Folk-Lore Journal," Vol. i., p. 330.

for twenty years. All these tasks are accomplished for him by the intervention of no fairy-godmother, but of the mermaid's beautiful daughter, Messeria. Ultimately the King's son and Messeria are married in the mermaid's palace, and rise to the surface of the sea. Then the King's son is seized with a violent longing to return to his father's house to see how things go on there. Messeria desires that they should go first to her father's house—for he also is an earthly King—but consents to her bridegroom's departure if he will go quickly, and eat nothing till he returns to her. But when the King's son reaches his father's palace, his scruples as to food are overcome so far that he eats a peppercorn, and instantly he forgets his Messeria, and all his life with the mermaid—so much so that he consents to his wedding being celebrated with the princess of a neighbouring kingdom. Messeria, sad at heart, journeyed to the King's son's palace, and became a waiting-maid. She had with her two doves, and when the wedding-feast was in progress, she threw down three grains of wheat to them in the banquetting-hall, but the cock picked them all up, leaving nothing for his mate, who said, to the wonder of all:

"Out upon thee!
Thou hast served me
As the King's son served Messeria."

This incident was three times repeated during the banquet, and at last the King's son remembered all the past, recognised Messeria, and clasping her to his breast, declared that she alone should be his bride.

Oh, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears;
Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote:
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take thee, and there lie,
And in that glorious supposition think
He gains by death that hath such means to die.

So says Antipholus of Syracuse, and from this text we may note the mermaid's song, and the mermaid's golden hair.

The singing of the mermaids is alluded to by Thomas Cogan, Master of Arts and Bachelor of Physicke, in his *Haven of Health* (1605), when citing Virgil, he says: "Women are much like to a wild beast called a panther, to whom it is said that herds of cattle do resort. . . . But when the panther hath them within his reach, he easily preyeth upon the poor cattle, being utterly dismayed with his fierce looks, or, as the mermaidens, whom poets fain with their sweet melodies to draw such unto

them as pass by, and then to devour them." Gunnyon in the second last paragraph of his volume on *Scottish Life and History in Song and Ballad* (1879) says: "The mermaid was a formidable being, beautiful above as Aphrodite, with blue eyes, ruddy lips, a smile sweeter than the bee, and a voice surpassing the songs of birds. Doomed was the luckless knight whom her fascinations induced to seize her hand. Soon his drowning scream was heard from the whirling eddy." This is a somewhat glowing description, but it brings us near to the sirens, who are probably the ancestresses of the mediæval mermaid, although the descent is crossed with legends of Asia, which we may be excused from entering upon here. It will be remembered that the Loriei, sung of by Heine, enticed the fisher in his tiny skiff by her singing. The mermaid of the old house of Knockdalion, near the water of Eirvan, was a singer, too, in her way. A black stone lay near the house, and on this stone the mermaid would sit at nights for hours singing and combing her yellow hair. The mistress of Knockdalion caused the stone to be broken, as she believed the singing annoyed her child. When the mermaid found her seat gone, she sang:

Ye may think on your cradle—I'll think on my
stone,
And there'll never be an heir to Knockdalion again.

Soon after the cradle was found overturned and the baby dead under it. The family became extinct.* So much for despising a mermaid's singing.

The splendour and colour of the mermaid's hair are traditional. The mermaid is of frequent use in heraldry, and this is how Guillim, in his *Display*, describes her: "He beareth argent a mermaid gules, crined or, holding a mirror in her right hand, a comb in her left. By the name of Ellis." This red mermaid with golden locks borne on the shield of the Ellis family, is reproduced in a portion of a window formerly in St. Nicholas Church, Yarmouth, now in the rectory of All Saints, South Elmham, near Halesworth, Suffolk. It is thus described by Mr. Syer Cuming: "In this example the damsel has a profusion of long hair, one lock of which she holds in her left hand, whilst in her right is placed a large, square, double-toothed comb. The lower or fishy portion of her person, commencing at the hips, is covered with large scales. This painting is apparently referable to the end of the fifteenth or early part of

* "Chambers' Popular Rhymes," etc., pp. 331, 332.

the sixteenth century."* The mermaid which is one of the supporters of the arms of the Company of Fishmongers has no comb, unlike Lord Tennyson's mermaid, who gives voice to the feeling of all authenticated mermaidens when she sings:

"I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
'Who is it loves me? who loves not me?'
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry, sea-weed crown
Low adown, and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall."

It was the yellow hair of a Forfarshire mermaid which nearly ruined the young laird of Lorntie. When riding home one night from a hunting excursion, accompanied by a servant, he heard cries of distress from a lake which lay hidden in a wood. He made his way quickly to the spot, and saw a beautiful woman in the last stage of exhaustion. She called to him by name to help her, and he rushed into the lake, and was about to grasp "the long yellow locks, which lay like hanks of gold upon the water," when his servant, who had followed him into the water, seized him and dragged him away. "Bide, Lorntie—bide a blink," the man called, "that wauling madame was nae other—God sauf us!—than the mermaid." And so indeed "that wauling madame" was, for as Lorntie prepared to mount his horse and ride off, she rose in the water and cried in anger:

"Lorntie, Lorntie,
Were it na your man,
I had gart your heart's bluid
Skirl in my pan."†

A curious book, with an odd title, was a year ago published by Mr. Frederic T. Hall, and one passage in it is so pertinent to the subject of mermaids, that we may be allowed to cite it without in any way committing ourselves to agreeing with Mr. Hall in all his deductions and inferences. "The pedigree of the fairies of romance," he says,‡ "is that of an idea evolved from obscure traditions based on facts. The earliest legends connect the idea of sorcery and witchcraft with beautiful

women. Lilith, the rabbinic first wife of Adam, was gifted with marvellous beauty, especially in her hair, and used spells and magic arts. A double of Lilith is probably to be found in Leila, a leading figure of Persian romance, of inexplicable fascination, of dark complexion, with long black hair, beautiful only to her lovers, but driving them to madness. The Babylonian epic of Izdhubar records his being withstood on the sea-coast by two women, Siduri and Sabitu, whom we may strongly suspect of being sorceresses. Kirke (Circe) is at once an enchantress and a nymph of rare beauty. The Sibyls were gifted with such magic as compelled even the gods, and one, at least, was of such beauty originally as to have been wooed by Apollo. The Gorgons, originally connected with the sea, have the magic power of turning all who look upon them to stone. They, too, had beautiful hair, which, in the case of Medusa, captivated Neptune, and procured its metamorphosis into serpents. The Sirens also were female nymphs, who, inhabiting cliffs near the sea, bewildered passing mariners by the sweetness of their voices, and allured them to their death. These find their exact counterparts in the Lorelei of the Rhine and the mermaidens of all the Northern seas, endued with irresistible powers of sweet music, by which they allure mortals to their ruin. They sing in sweet and plaintive tones, and comb their golden hair. In passing, it may be noted that St. Paul refers to long hair as the glory of a woman; that mystic power resided in the hair of Samson; and that Mahomet had long hair. In the Apocalyptic vision, a swarm of monstrous beings are, on the sounding of the fifth trumpet, described as rising out of the smoke of the bottomless pit. They are composite and monstrous in shape, endued with special powers to hurt man. They are under command of the arch-fiend Apollyon, and they have long hair. Sorceresses and witches of all time have had dishevelled hair when entering on their sombre rites and incantations, and the Dame du Lac—a fay of romance—had wonderful hair." To this it may be added as an additional link between the sirens and the mermaids, that, as if to illustrate the classical tale that the sirens had once wings, but lost them when vanquished by the muses, there are existing representations of seventeenth century work of mermaids with wings.

* "Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc." Vol. xxxviii., p. 60.

† "Popular Rhymes," p. 332.

‡ "The Pedigree of the Devil," 1883, p. 57.

Oberon says to Puck, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :

Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.

The learned commentators find in this passage a reference to Mary Queen of Scots. That she is the mermaid is obscurely indicated by the mention of the dolphin—the Dauphin of France being her first husband. “The rude sea” represents Scotland, and the Earls of Northumberland, Westmoreland, and the Duke of Norfolk, who followed Mary's fortunes in preference to those of Elizabeth, are figured by the words “certain stars.” The commentators may be right, but we think it extremely improbable. From the context it seems much more probably a poetic reminiscence of that fête at Kenilworth when Leicester entertained Elizabeth with the revels described by Laneham and (from Laneham's narrative) by Sir Walter Scott.

The tail is such an important feature of a mermaid's appearance that it deserves a paragraph to itself. Grimm, in his great work on German mythology, notes that in many of the stories of white women, swan necks, etc., the main idea is that something has to be done to release a banned spirit doomed to undergo certain strange appearances, and often the deliverance can only be accomplished by the hero doing something very disagreeable, as kissing a snake or toad; thus Launcelot kisses the mouth of the dragon, and the dragon turns into a lady. Now and then, he adds, the apparition of the sea-maiden is explained by the facts that she is a water-witch or nixe, and they, too, need redemption. But such mer-women, he goes on to say, generally assume wholly or in part the shape of a snake or fish. Some of the early writers on natural history, in their zeal to depict the mermaid correctly, gave her two tails,

and in a foreign work of 1508, the *Margarita Philosophica*, printed at Basle, Mr. Cuming found a little woodcut of fish in the sea, and among them a mermaid without arms, but with two tails, which rise on either hand as high as the lady's coronated head. Such pictorial representations do not help us much as to the idea of sailors as to the mermaidens, but if we were to believe the numerous stories of the capture of mermaids and mermen, which Pliny and others credit, there should be small difficulty in getting an accurate portrait. In 1775, in 1794, and again in 1822, mermaids were exhibited in London, and were very successful attractions. That of 1822 was made by the lower part of a dried monkey being concealed in the skin of a salmon, and the whole being varnished over.

Sir James Emerson Tennent regarded the dugong as the original of the mermaid stories, but we may believe it that the seal of our own coasts has many a time been taken for a semi-human monster. Miss Gordon Cumming, in her narrative of a cruise in a French man-of-war, gives us a more pleasing foundation for mariners' tales. No female in Marquesas, in Polynesia, is allowed to enter a canoe; consequently, when a foreign vessel arrives, the women can only inspect it by swimming over to it. “Small wonder if sailors, perceiving these fair-skinned beauties with their tresses of long black hair floating around them, suppose their visitors to be a company of mermaids.” Charming mermaids, no doubt, but we hear nothing of their silvery voices, or the shining comb or glass.

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